

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1-4, 11, 12, 14-19, 21 and 25. Claim 8 was canceled without prejudice. Pending claims 1-5, 7, 9-21 and 24-29 follow:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing meat products comprising:

providing a first member comprising a first surface defining a concavity and having comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from said first surface ~~and~~ arranged in a first netting pattern;

providing a second member comprising a second surface defining a concavity having comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from said second surface ~~and~~ arranged in a second netting pattern; the first and second members having similar shapes and sizes, being pivotally coupled together, and being pivotally moveable;

providing a meat product having a pre-defined shape;

pivotally closing the first and second members, thereby sandwiching the meat product between the first and second surfaces and impressing the first and second netting patterns on the meat product;

heating the two members, thereby heating the meat product between the two members and forming the impressed netting patterns on ~~cooking the impressed patterns on the~~ meat product;

pivotally opening the two members;

removing the ~~impressed~~ meat product from the two members; and
cooking the meat product to a desired state.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising packaging the meat product in a film prior to sandwiching the meat product between the two members, wherein sandwiching further comprises placing ~~sandwiching~~ the packaged meat product between the two members impressing the first and second patterns on the meat product, and wherein heating comprises heating the packaged meat product within the two members for cooking the impressed patterns onto on the packaged meat product.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the first and second netting patterns are the same.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises immersing the two members and the ~~with~~ meat product in hot water.

5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises electrically heating the two members.

6. (Previously Canceled).

7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises applying steam to the two members.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein sandwiching comprises applying hydraulic pressure on one of said first and second members.

10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein providing a first member comprises providing a member having a plurality of longitudinal protrusions and a plurality of lateral parallel protrusions.

11. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising:

positioning a conveyor having a belt over a container holding ~~containing~~ hot water; and

coupling the two members to ~~on~~ the conveyor belt, wherein cooking the meat product comprises moving ~~rotating~~ the conveyor belt to submerge the first and second members into the hot water.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 11 further comprising:

providing a third member coupled to the conveyor belt, the third member comprising a third surface defining a concavity and having ~~comprising~~ a plurality of protrusions extending from the third surface ~~and~~ arranged in a third netting pattern;

providing a fourth member coupled to the conveyor belt, the fourth member comprising a fourth surface defining a concavity and having ~~comprising~~ a plurality of protrusions extending from the fourth surface ~~and~~ arranged in a fourth netting pattern; the third and fourth members having similar shapes and sizes, being pivotally coupled together, and being pivotally moveable;

advancing ~~rotating~~ the conveyor belt and thereby positioning ~~placing~~ the third and fourth members over the water in the container;

packaging a second meat product in a film;

placing the second packaged meat product between the third and fourth surfaces;

pivotally closing the third and fourth members, thereby sandwiching the second packaged meat product between the third and fourth surfaces and impressing the third and fourth netting patterns on the second packaged meat product; and

further advancing ~~rotating~~ the conveyor belt and thereby placing the third and fourth members in the hot water for forming ~~cooking~~ the impressed third and fourth netting patterns on the second packaged meat product.

13. (Original) A method as recited in claim 12 wherein when the first and second members are not in the hot water, the third and fourth members are submerged in the hot water.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for processing meat products comprising:

providing a first member ~~having comprising~~ a ~~plurality of~~ first surface defining a concavity and having a first plurality of protrusions, the protrusions extending from said first surface to form a first netting pattern and define adjacent depressions ~~depressions each first depression comprising a plurality of protrusions;~~

providing a second member ~~having comprising~~ a ~~plurality of~~ second surface defining a concavity and having a second plurality of protrusions, the protrusions extending from said second surface to form a second netting pattern and define adjacent depressions ~~depressions corresponding to the plurality of first depressions, each of the second depressions comprising a plurality of protrusions;~~ the first and second members having similar shapes and sizes, being pivotally coupled together, and being pivotally moveable;

placing meat products having pre-defined shapes in each of said plurality of first depressions;

aligning the first member with the second member, whereby ~~wherein~~ each of said ~~first depressions defined by said first plurality of protrusions~~ is aligned with a ~~second depression defined by said second plurality of protrusions;~~

pivotally closing the aligned first and second members, thereby sandwiching the first and second members, impressing the protrusions of a first and second depression on each of said meat products and forming netting impressions on the outer surfaces of the meat products;

heating the first and second members, thereby heating the meat products between the two members and forming the impressed netting patters ~~for cooking the mpressions on the meat products; and~~

pivotally opening the two members; and

removing the meat products from the two members.

15. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising cooking the meat products to a desired extent state.

16. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising packaging the meat products in a film prior to sandwiching the meat product between the two members, wherein sandwiching comprises sandwiching the packaged meat products between the two members impressing the protrusions of the first and the second depression on said meat products, thereby forming impressions on the outer surfaces of the meat products, ~~and~~ wherein cooking comprises cooking the packaged meat products within the two members for forming ~~cooking~~ the impressions on the packaged meat products.

17. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 16 further comprising cooking the packaged meat products until ~~to~~ a desired state is achieved.

18. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein sandwiching comprises applying hydraulic pressure to urge ~~on~~ one of said first and second members against the other of said first and second members.

19. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein each of the protrusions of the first and second members ~~first depressions and second depressions~~ comprise a plurality of longitudinal protrusions and a plurality of lateral parallel protrusions.

20. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein heating comprises electrically heating the first and second depressions.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a meat product having a pre-defined shape comprising:

packaging the meat product between a first member and a second member, the first and second members each having a surface defining a concavity and comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from the surface and representing a netting pattern, the first and second members having similar shapes and sizes and being pivotally coupled together and pivotally moveable between open and closed positions;

forming providing an a netting impression on the packaged meat product outer surface while packaged by sandwiching the packaged meat product in a compartment of an impression device having protrusions that impress the netting pattern into the packaged meat product outer surface;

heating the impression device, thereby heating the packaged meat product and cooking the netting impression onto the meat product outer surface; and

cooking the meat product to a desired state.

22. (Previously Canceled).

23. (Previously Canceled).

24. (Original) A method as recited in claim 21 further comprising removing the packaged meat product from the device after heating and before cooking.

25. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 24 further comprising providing a cooking device separate from the impression device for cooking the meat product to a desired extent state.

26. (Previously Added) The method of claim 1, the first and second members comprising shell members.

27. (Previously Added) The method of claim 12, the third and fourth members comprising shell members.

28. (Previously Added) The method of claim 14, the first and second members comprising shell members.

29. (Previously Added) The method of claim 21, the first and second members comprising shell members.